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Cannabis Licensing Authority announces April 4 Start Date

The Cannabis Licensing Authority (CLA) has announced that it will be ready to accept applications for ganja licenses for Monday, April 4, 2016. The regulations that will allow for the granting of licenses have now been drafted and are currently being reviewed ahead of finalisation and approval, which is expected in the next two weeks. These regulations will immediately allow for the publishing of application forms as well as the furnishing of information to potential licensees on eligibility criteria and the terms and conditions of licenses.

Under the regulations, eleven types of licenses across five main categories will be made available to interested persons – cultivator, transportation, processing, retailing, and R&D – ensuring coverage over the entire value chain for the medicinal marijuana industry. The regulations make special provisions for small farmers, cooperatives, and small-scale processors to participate in the industry with distinct requirements and licensing fee structures in place. Residency requirements and local participation in companies have also been included as a critical component of participation in this nascent industry. Licenses will also be available for importation for research under conditions stipulated by the CLA. As a special concession to ensure the participation of small growers in the new industry, the CLA will waive the up-front payment of licensing fees for this category of licensee for the first year of operations.

Once the interim regulations have been agreed, the Authority will continue its consultations, including the hosting of a series of town-hall meetings across the island, where it hopes to gather additional information to refine the licensing regime and build-out the full industry management framework that will underpin the emergence of Jamaica’s new, legal ganja industry. With this done, the Authority expects to be able to put forward an expanded and more comprehensive set of regulations by May 2016 that will seek to address other areas of the industry.

“We made a commitment to the people of Jamaica that the Cannabis industry would be in place by the end of the fiscal year, and we will meet that commitment,” said Dr. Andre Gordon, Chairman of the CLA. The Hon. G. Anthony Hylton, Minister of Industry, Investment and Commerce, who has portfolio responsibility for the Authority, noted his pleasure with the pace with which the nine-month old agency has delivered on its mandate and stated that he looks forward to the start of the industry, and the full participation of the various stakeholders as Jamaica continues to make in-roads in the development of the country’s ganja industry.

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